(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) In view of (b) above, do not arise.

(e) The Government does not set up small scale industries or khadi and village industries in villages. However, Government (in the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries) implements two credit-linked subsidy schemes of employment generation, namely, (i) Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) by assisting entrepreneurs in setting up village industries, including cottage industries, in rural areas and small towns, and (ii) Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) for creating employment opportunities for the educated unemployed youth in the rural as well as urban areas (approximately fifty per cent of the PMRY units established are estimated to be in rural areas). Subsidy admissible to the beneficiaries of both these schemes is released through banks in combination with the loans provided by these banks.

Besides, Government, through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, implements various other programmes for the development and promotion and khadi and village industries.

Schemes for agro and rural industries in Andhra Pradesh

1338. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether new schemes and programmes have been implemented for the benefit of agro and rural industries in Andhra Pradesh, where farmers have committed suicides;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, whether there is any proposal to implement new schemes in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF AGRO AND RURAL INDUSTRIES (SHRI MAHAVIR

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PRASAD): (a) to (c) The Government (in the Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries) has been implementing a number of schemes throughout the country, including Andhra Pradesh. Of these, the most important are the two credit-linked subsidy schemes, namely, the Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) and the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) for creation of off-farm employment opportunities by assisting individual entrepreneurs, educated unemployed youths, self help groups, etc., in setting up village industries, including related business/service

enterprises. REGP is implemented in rural areas and small town with population below 20,000 while PMRY is implemented in both rural and urban areas.

The schemes relating to khadi are implemented in Andhra Pradesh through 78 khadi institutions. Khadi is mainly an agro-based activity.

Through the Coir Board, the Government implements a number of schemes for development of the coir industry, in coconut growing States, including Andhra Pradesh.

Use of communication facilities of private companies in Government offices

†1339. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have given permission to all Government departments to utilize the communication facilities of private sector companies at their will;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government companies will face economic pressure as a result thereof; and

(d) if so, what is the estimated annual loss of these companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Ministry of Finance issued instructions on 23.11.2005 on Economic measures which *inter-alia* allow the Ministries/Departments to avail telecom services of providers other than the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), provided the criteria for selecting the alternative service provider are based on better and more competitive rates being offered by the latter.

(c) and (d) Government companies can meet the challenge of competition by offering competitive rates. Large scale migration of telephone connections from PSUs to private companies is not expected and, therefore, reduction in revenues of these companies cannot be assessed.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.